



if we're unmade when the stars fade by everybreatheeverymove

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Summary: (Prompt: Raindrops on eyelashes and the creak of leather.) The last thing she expects to see that night is a rain-soaked, sobbing seventeen-year-old boy stood on her front doorstep. But he's there; her boyfriend with the unruly hair, her favorite person, her Mike Wheeler.

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The last thing she expects to see that night is a rain-soaked, sobbing seventeen-year-old boy stood on her front doorstep. But he's there; her boyfriend with the unruly hair, her favorite person, *her* Mike Wheeler.

He hadn't called beforehand, hadn't let her know he was stopping by. But he'd showed up less than a minute ago, wet-through and sobbing and holding back more tears.

"Mike?"

Feet growing cold from the cool air outside, El quickly ushers him inside. She pulls on the sleeves of his coat to drag him in, internally cringing at the blistering cold of the material.

"Are you okay?" She asks, staring up at him with tears pooling in her own eyes. She gently grabs his face to inspect him for cuts or injuries, tilting his head from side to side for a moment. But the only traces of pain she finds are the drops of water falling freely from his eyelashes as his eyes scrunch up in agony, a whole new bout of tears escaping.

"Talk to me."

(Hopper is out on a late call, and he won't be back for several hours.)

(Mike is *freezing*.)

El brings her hands up his chest then, palms flat against the sticky dampness of this coat. When she reaches the top, she makes quick work of unzipping it. She pushes the jacket from his shoulders, slim wrists bent against his collarbones once the sleeves start to slide down his arms. But it stops midway down his frame, pooling around his elbows, and El has to shove it the rest of the way off in order to toss it aside. She throws it over the arm of the couch, wet seeping through into the old woolen blanket.

"Mike."

She pushes up on her tiptoes to face him directly, but she's still a

couple of inches too short. So, she cups his left cheek in her hand and forcefully brings his head down to her level. She gazes up at him through her lashes, allowing him to absentmindedly rest his forehead against hers and use her for support. His tears cease, seemingly finding comfort in her embrace, and she can feel the sobs raking over his body with every breath. But the boy's eyes are still shut tight, and he's still breathing heavily through his nose with next to no sign of stopping.

The collar of his shirt is soaking wet, flush and darker than its usual green against the pale, goose-bumped skin of his neck, but it's tucked in beneath his sweater and El quickly moves to loosen it. She pops open the first button, curling her fingers around the lapels of his collar to allow him more room to breathe.

The material slackens around the base of his neck, and El slips her hands down the back of his shirt to rest her hands flat against his skin, the warmth of her touch causing a gasp to escape past Mike's lips. It's the first real sound of his voice El has heard in minutes.

Never lifting her gaze from off of his face, El's eyes fall onto his lips. They're blueing and dry from the cold air outside, and there are raindrops (or teardrops; she can't decide which, and she doesn't want to know) resting on his chin.

The girl thoughtlessly presses her mouth against his lower face then, rose lips flush against his jaw. She casually kisses her way along his jawline, making sure to soak up the water drops as she goes, hands gripping his shoulders tight to steady them both.

"Tell me," she says. She presses a small kiss to the corner of his mouth, eyes closing in agony at his suffering, "please?"

El feels his arms slowly creep around her body, hands moving from his sides to her lower back. Mike grips her tightly, almost painfully, long fingers digging into the softness of her pajama t-shirt. But then his arms slither around her waist and he pulls her into his front a second later; chest pressed against his, head nuzzling into the side of his neck as she mumbles soothing words to him.

"I had a dream,"

El blinks, settling on keeping her eyes closed as she asks, soft and low, "What kind of dream?" She whispers the words, voice muffled by the material of Mike's shirt. She tugs on the neck of his sweater again, feeling his throat bob against her knuckles.

"About you," he says. Mike lowers his gaze, but she's thankful that at least his eyes are open now. They're teary and tired, but they belong to the boy she loves and that's enough for her. He inhales a sharp intake of air and slips his right hand up her back, up her t-shirt to smooth along her bare skin, "You were gone."

The words are spoken so softly, so quietly that El would have a hard time hearing him if she weren't already stood so *close*. He sounds so broken, so fragile and pure, that El isn't quite sure how to comfort him.

The girl eventually nods her head, barely, lips parting as she struggles to find the right words; words that will calm him and reassure him of her love.

"I'm not going anywhere, Mike." El sighs, and she rises up on her toes to clasp his face between both hands. Her eyes are blown wide, hazel and confident and honest as truth, "Not ever."

He frowns, but his brows pull together in what El just knows is hopefulness. Mike licks his lips after a beat, staring down into her eyes. Then he starts, "But—"

Cutting him off with a simple flick of her wrist, El sweeps wet hair from his face. She pushes long, black locks back, smiling in admiration as the strands curl around his ear. Keeping her fingertips pressed against his high cheekbones, she says, "Even if I did," a breath, "I would always come back."

"You would?"

"Yes," she nods, and her hands move from his face to the hem of his sweater. She pulls on the material, ringing it out with clenched fists and watching as drops of water land on Mike's sneakers, "because *you're* here."

Shuffling closer along the wooden floor, El nudges Mike's legs apart with a soft kick. She wiggles bare feet between his shoes, standing up on her tiptoes one final time—just enough so she can press her lips against his innocently. Eyes squeezing shut in concentration, El slips her hands beneath his sweater to draw it up his body, the thick wool bunching around her wrists as she waits for Mike to raise his arms and cooperate.

It only takes him a second, and then he's breaking the kiss and peeling the sweater away himself. Staring straight down at her mouth, Mike's nostrils flare as he asks, "El?" His hands make their way to her sides, higher than her waist.

She smiles up at him shyly, almost slyly, "yes?"

There's a distinct sound of metal clinking, and Mike glances down to find two hands wrapped around the leather of his belt. He lowers his head to hers then, lashes fluttering against her forehead as he asks, voice quivering, "What are you doing?"

Blinking back hesitation, El shrugs, "Being here," she tells him, doe-eyed as the tugs on both sides of his belt. The strap hangs openly around Mike's waist, the leather creaking ever so slightly when El tugs, pulls, yanks on the material and wraps it around her wrists to usher him closer. "Let me." She grabs one of Mike's wrists then, resting a cold hand on the curve of her spine, his fingers pointing downward.

There are still teardrops (or raindrops; she can't decide which, and she doesn't want to know) on his cheeks, and El slowly pushes up and up until she can press her lips against his own, plump and rosier than they had been several minutes ago.

El sighs into the kiss, and she lets go of his jeans hoops to cups his face between her hands again, running her thumbs along his cheekbones just as Mike pulls away.

"You—You promise you're okay?" Mike rasps, and there's something in his voice that lets El know just how much he's thinking of her. That, and the way he tightens his grip on her frame and allows her to just *melt* into him.

She smiles, nodding, "Promise."